

SUBJECT: Mandatory Use of Travel Management Systems

TO: Rural Development State Directors
National Office Officials

PURPOSE/INTENDED OUTCOME:

This is to disseminate the Department's formal decision relating to specific travel situations when use of a Travel Management Center (TMC) is not mandatory.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:

NONE. This policy will be incorporated in a future revision to RD Instruction 2036-A.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:

The implementation date is for travel performed after January 1, 2001.

(Signed by J. Michael Clark)

J. MICHAEL CLARK
Director
Support Services Division

Attachment

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2002

FILING INSTRUCTION:
Preceding RD Instruction 2036-A

December 26, 2000

TO: CFO Advisory Committee

FROM: Richard M. Guyer
Acting Director
Fiscal Policy Division

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During the past several months, we have had discussions with travel policy staff in departmental agencies concerning the January 1, 2001, implementation of the General Services Administration (GSA) mandatory use of Travel Management Systems. In particular, we discussed the Travel Management Center (TMC) portion of the travel management systems.

Departmental policy has long held that where TMCs were available, they must be used. However, this generally applied only to common carrier transportation. With implementation of the GSA requirement, booking of hotel/motel accommodations and rental cars through the TMC becomes mandatory.

As a result of our discussions, we have determined that certain types of travel should not be held to the new standards. Exercising the authority granted to us in the Federal Travel Regulation, Part 301-73.103, we exempt the following travel situations from mandatory use of a TMC:

- ➔ Any travel for which advance reservations are impractical, e.g., when traveler is on the road and does not know where lodging will be needed.
- ➔ For travel situations where only a rental car is needed, travelers may deal directly with the appropriate company.
- ➔ Hotel accommodations for a conference, seminar, etc., where the sponsoring organization has arranged for a special rate and ensured that the facility complies with the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act's (HMFSA) standards.

At this time, these are the only exceptions to the mandatory use of a TMC. However, you may request an exception for agency-unique travel situations. Such requests should include as much information as possible, e.g., when exception will be invoked, by whom, how often, controls, etc. Please keep in mind that mandatory use of a TMC serves as an alternate to reporting compliance under the HMFSa. Therefore, should you ask for an exception for lodging accommodations, you will need to provide us with your plans for ensuring compliance with the act and for reporting such compliance to us on an annual basis.